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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [NATO](#) [AZ](#) [FR](#) [SR](#) [GG](#) [RU](#) [BM](#) [IN](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: U/S BURNS DISCUSSES KOSOVO, AFGHANISTAN, GEORGIA,
BURMA, INDIA AND IRAN WITH FRENCH MFA POLITICAL DIRECTOR
ARAUD

Classified By: A/DCM Josiah Rosenblatt for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. In an October 30 working dinner with MFA Political Director Gerard Araud, U/S Burns urged the European community to respect the "firm" deadline of December 10 to conclude final status negotiations on Kosovo and pushed for a Membership Action Plan (MAP) for Georgia. Araud hoped that any UDI could be delayed for just a few weeks (until mid-January) so as not to foreclose the possibility of an OSCE mission mandate extension, and to give the Europeans more time to prepare their response. The GOF opposes MAP for Georgia, but supports creating a special program with incentives for Georgia that would not refer to "membership." That said, Sarkozy would have to eventually pronounce on the Georgia MAP question. Burns and Araud also discussed possible new members in connection with NATO's April 2008 Bucharest summit, with Araud articulating GOF understanding of Greece's position on Macedonian membership. On Afghanistan, both agreed on the benefits of giving an appropriately expanded mandate to the UN High Representative to better integrate civilian and military efforts. The French agreed to provide a draft job description. Araud countered U/S Burns' call for greater West European engagement in southern and eastern Afghanistan by citing the purported need for an overall strategy, including conditions for eventual withdrawal of foreign forces. U/S Burns expressed appreciation for FM Kouchner's recent visit to Asia and helpful statements on Burma. Araud said Kouchner would want to discuss Burma with the Secretary, possibly in Istanbul. On India, the French acknowledged that a U.S. agreement with India on nuclear cooperation was needed for them to move forward on their own agreement, and Araud suggested unblocking the issue for the GOI by having a joint-signing ceremony of "Agreements of Cooperation" and "Letters of Intent" with France, Russia and the U.S. In a brief one-on-one discussion of Iran, Araud expressed pessimism about an Iranian willingness to negotiate or suspend enrichment, and was negative about El-Baradei. He said he expected the EU would wait until Dec. 19 before coming up with fairly weak sanctions -- and possibly none at all if a new UNSCR is not adopted. End Summary.

WHEN TO RECOGNIZE AN INDEPENDENT KOSOVO?

¶2. (C) Araud began the discussion by noting that the GOF believed a negotiated settlement on Kosovo's final status was very unlikely; it was therefore important to plan how to manage a probable UDI and its aftermath. The question was not "whether" to recognize Kosovo, but "when." U/S Burns emphasized that for the USG the December 10 deadline was firm. The U.S. would not agree to any further extensions of negotiations. Araud supported this position, but stated the

French preference that any UDI and subsequent recognition of Kosovo not take place until mid-January. This would assist the effort to obtain a renewal of the OSCE mission mandate by December 31 (for which there was a greater chance of obtaining Russian approval if there was no prior UDI). If the Russians refuse to renew the OSCE mission, the burden will fall upon the EU to fill the gap and further delay the implementation of the ESDP mission they are planning. Furthermore, the December 13-14 European Council could better prepare a text for a declaration by the 27 members (a neutral text similar to that done for Montenegro) if there was no complicating UDI immediately after the December 10 deadline.

13. (C) U/S Burns expressed concern that a delay of UDI and a recognition of Kosovo could lead to public unrest or encourage those who favor further negotiations. He noted that Kosovo's unresolved status is a problem for the U.S. as well as Europe. Araud acknowledged these concerns, but said that a delay until mid-January would help the Europeans to achieve a "critical mass" of 18-20 countries that would be able to recognize Kosovo's independence immediately; the "delay" they are requesting is one of only a few weeks (until January 10-15). He added that Thaci was promising other European leaders that, if elected as Kosovo's next Prime Minister, he could agree to delay a UDI until mid-March, something many Europeans wanted to hear. Araud raised concerns about the possible Serbian reaction to a UDI, noting that Kostunica has been less and less willing to help reach a solution (and in fact was linking Kosovo to the current situation in the Republika Serbska). A strong Serbian backlash could lead to the expulsion of ambassadors of countries that recognize Kosovo initially and a stirring up of conflict in Bosnia and Kosovo. Therefore, it is imperative to work out the chronology of a UDI and recognition as soon as possible, and in the view of the GOF,

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a "minimum decent interval" between the end of the negotiating process and the UDI and recognition of Kosovo is their preferred solution. Araud also said the international community should send a signal to Serbia about what its future will be after Kosovo is resolved. Carla Del Ponte's recent statements did not help. U/S Burns noted how important it was for Serbia to apprehend and bring to justice Mladic and Karadzic.

14. (C) On Bosnia, U/S Burns informed Araud about the recent A/S Fried telephone call to support the High Representative. The USG believes that long-term, Bosnia will have to engage in constitutional reform to normalize their institutions to succeed in joining NATO or the EU. Araud agreed and said that it was important to send positive signals on a European future to both the Bosnians and Serbs, although their current, revanchist approach was more shaped by the past than constructively focused on their European future.

DIVERGENCE ON GEORGIA MAP

15. (C) U/S Burns stated to Araud that the USG strongly supports giving Georgia a Membership Action Plan (MAP) at Bucharest in April. However, for tactical reasons, he said that a firm decision on this issue was not needed until after Kosovo was decided this December. That said, every country has a right to choose its alliances and if NATO turns down Georgia's application, it would be tantamount to allowing Russia to make membership decisions for the alliance. Araud agreed that this is a decision for NATO to make, but the Russian obsession about encirclement is real, something we had to contend with. There is also a real danger of a harsh Russian reaction, possibly even military action against Georgia, putting the credibility of the alliance at stake. Araud also criticized "inflammatory" Georgian actions that have led to increased tensions with Russia. The GOF is prepared to offer a "significant package" to Georgia, but

does not want it to be called the MAP (or have any word associated with "membership"). He suggested simply calling it the "Georgia Action Plan" and said the alliance could include a declaration of concern about Georgian security. This is the plan the French and Germans are currently working on.

16. (C) U/S Burns quickly noted that Russia had been given 16 years to integrate more fully into the Alliance, but had chosen partnership instead, and had since done nothing in the NATO-Russia Council and had pulled out of most military missions. In his view, the Russians wouldn't dare to react militarily against Georgia, knowing how damaging such a move would be to its standing. A "Georgia Action Plan" (GAP) would not work; NATO needs to make a decision on its own without Russian interference. Philippe Carre, Director of Strategic Affairs at the MFA, noted that the GOF recognizes Georgia's aspirations and takes them seriously. The French consider MAP to be a promise of full membership and the alliance should not accept a country as a member just to spite Russia. The French have concerns about Saakashvili's government and corruption in Georgian politics. U/S Burns responded that Saakashvili had matured in office and that NATO had never used corruption as a bar for membership for other countries. Closing the discussion, Araud noted that the French position was not cast in stone: MAP for Georgia would eventually go to Sarkozy for a decision, a decision that could not be pre-judged.

BUCHAREST SUMMIT AND NEW MEMBERS

17. (C) Araud stated that the GOF supports Croatia becoming a full member of NATO at the April 2-4 summit in Bucharest. The French do not consider Albania and Macedonia ready to join the alliance yet, but if the USG insists on including them as well, the GOF will not resist. U/S Burns said that the USG didn't have a firm position yet. Ambassador Nuland would be visiting all three candidate countries November 7-9 and NATO could debate membership in January/February 2008. He added that the greatest difficulty was being posed by Greece, which is threatening to veto membership for Macedonia over the name dispute. While we understand the domestic Greek politics driving that position, we do not agree that Greece should risk of destabilizing Macedonia over the name issue. The United Nations Matthew Nimitz is continuing efforts on this issue. Araud agreed that this was a real problem, but said that the GOF was unwilling to put any pressure on Greece on this issue; Greece is also a member of

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the EU and France will align itself in solidarity with Athens.

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FUTURE STRATEGY AND CAPABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN

18. (C) U/S Burns stated that the international structure to provide assistance in Afghanistan was not working well. The USG supports the appointment of a more senior civilian coordinator with an appropriately expanded mandate to focus on economics, narcotics control, rebuilding of infrastructure and uniting civilian and military efforts. He hoped that France and the UK could agree on a job description and person to fill it in in December. Araud agreed and suggested nominating Paddy Ashdown as someone with requisite civilian and military experience. He noted that the GOF does not/not think the representative should also wear an EU hat.

19. (C) Burns then raised the problems stemming from lack of military commitments in the east and south of Afghanistan. Araud responded that the GOF recently decided to send a new Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT) to work with the Dutch in Uruzgan. However, President Sarkozy had not made any military decisions for 2009 and beyond, and noted

that the GOF is currently undertaking a comprehensive defense and security review. He said the French are against staying "indefinitely" in Afghanistan and the Europeans want a clearer vision of the benchmarks that will trigger a drawdown of NATO forces. The problem for many in Europe is public opinion; Europeans don't understand why they should have forces in Afghanistan; the difficulty is compounded in countries where parliament has a say in troop deployments. U/S Burns responded that in our view, the U.S. and NATO forces will be in Afghanistan for the long-term. Unfortunately, the lack of burdensharing (particularly by west European countries) is causing resentment in those countries whose troops are shouldering the greatest burden. Until the Afghan government has the capacity to defend itself, it is in the interest of all NATO countries to make a sufficiently strong military effort to support it. That was the decision agreed to in 2003 and the USG is prepared to discuss future strategy in Afghanistan in greater detail if that will assist the French to move troops into the east and south in greater numbers. A strategy discussion of the kind the French were calling for could be linked to the appointment and mandate enlargement of the new UN rep.

SUPPORTING BURMA

¶10. (C) U/S Burns expressed appreciation for FM Kouchner's statements on Burma and his presence in the region. He added that it was important for UN Special Representative Gambari to return to Burma soon, and that the UN needed to be more forceful about whom he would see (and not leave these decisions to the Burmese generals). Araud agreed and added that the last EU GAERC meeting had agreed on no new investment in the country. He clarified that Kouchner's recent call for "financial incentives" for Burma referred to a proposed foundation to support the opposition in Burma and not/not financial incentives for the Burmese generals. Araud noted that FM Kouchner will want to discuss Burma at the next opportunity, possibly at Istanbul.

INDIA: NUCLEAR COOPERATION AT STANDSTILL

¶11. (C) Araud informed U/S Burns that a proposed French-Indian agreement on nuclear cooperation was on hold until the U.S. agreement could be signed by India and ratified by the U.S. Congress. The GOF would like to quickly sign an "Agreement of Cooperation," which alone would not have commercial implications. Burns expressed hope that the Indian government would find a way to move forward as soon as possible. The USG hopes that India would move forward on agreements with the U.S. before moving forward with agreements with third countries if they remained blocked on an agreement with the U.S. Araud, saying he fully understood, suggested that perhaps the Indian government could consider signing cooperation agreements and letters of intent at the same time with the three interested countries (U.S., Russia and France). This might dilute domestic opposition and allow the process to move forward. He added that the GOF would like to see progress on this issue before President Sarkozy's visit to India at the end of January,

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IRAN: GOF PESSIMISM

¶12. (C) In a brief one-on-one discussion of Iran, Araud expressed pessimism about an Iranian willingness to negotiate or suspend enrichment, and was negative about El-Baradei. He said he expected the EU would wait until Dec. 19 before coming up with fairly weak sanctions -- and possibly none at all if a new UNSCR is not adopted.

113. (U) This message was reviewed and cleared by U/S Burns.

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